



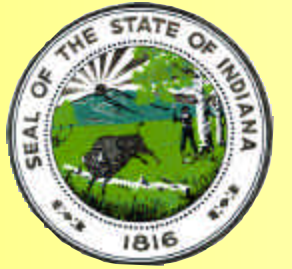
**BRENT
WALTZ**
State Senate — District 36

2006 Legislative Update

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WALTZ**
State Senate — District 36



2006 Legislative Update

Dear Friends,

It was an honor to represent you in the Indiana State Senate during the 2006 General Assembly. This session was perhaps one of the more important for the citizens of southern Marion County and northern Johnson County in many years. The debate surrounding the proposal to make a toll road for the northern route of I-69 through State Road 37 will have far-reaching economic consequences to our community and impact our quality of life for decades to come. Given the importance of this issue, I wanted to dedicate a significant portion of my newsletter to this discussion. **While we succeeded in moving the route away from White River Township and Perry Township, there are those in the legislature who will want to try to bring back the tolling of State Road 37 as an interstate.** I will remain vigilant in this fight and continue to work hard to protect the 800 jobs and more than \$100 million in assessed property that would disappear if this proposal would be approved.

There were many other successes this year. The legislature has taken the first steps to reforming its outrageous lifetime health insurance program. Indiana passed the toughest laws to protect young Hoosiers against child predators. We took on the issue of eminent domain in order to secure the property rights of Indiana residents that were placed in jeopardy by a recent Supreme Court decision. Although I was disappointed by only modest property tax reform, I was pleased with what was accomplished in the 2006 General Assembly.

I would like to thank the taxpayer organization Watchdog Indiana for the recognition of my stance on not raising taxes during last year's General Assembly. "Only one General Assembly member proved to be a taxpayer friendly hero of Hoosier working families — State Senator Brent Waltz was the only member who voted no on both HB 1001 and 1120." You can see the entire article as well as review every legislator's record by logging onto www.watchdogindiana.org.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you.

Sincerely,

Brent Waltz
State Senator,
District 36



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Senator Waltz congratulates the graduating class of 2006 home school students. Waltz authored Senate Concurrent Resolution 53 on March 13 honoring the students for their achievements. The Indiana Foundation for Home Schooling hosts a statewide graduation ceremony each year to recognize home school students who are graduating. This year's 12th Annual Graduation ceremony will be held in Indianapolis in May.

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MAJOR MOVES

The debate over the route of the proposed extension of Interstate 69 occupied a tremendous amount of time and energy during this year's legislative session. I can think of no other issue that will have more direct impact on our community than where I-69 will be built. I have spoken with many of you over the past several months about specific aspects of this issue. Here are some of the questions I've been asked, along with why I've been such a strong opponent to using State Road 37 as an interstate toll road.

What was being debated?

The legislature sought to determine the route from I-69 as well as whether or not that highway was going to be a toll road. I-69 was included as part of Governor Daniels' "Major Moves" proposal, since much of its funding would be from the money received from the leased toll-way in northern Indiana.

What was the final result of the I-69 route and toll road debate in the Senate?

We approved an amendment that stopped State Road 37 from being turned into either an interstate and/or a toll road. I was joined by several local state senators, such as Patricia Miller, Michael Young and Richard Bray, who refused to support Major Moves without this amendment. This amendment was included in the final version of the bill and is now state law.

Why didn't you like the proposed route?

I had several reasons. First, Perry Township would lose approximately \$100 million in assessed property value. This loss would come from the businesses, homes and other buildings that would be seized and demolished to make room for I-69. This would cause every home and business in Perry Township to have a property tax increase. Approximately 800 jobs would be disrupted as a result of businesses along the State Road 37 corridor having to close or relocate. Some of these jobs would return; many would be permanently lost. I was deeply troubled by the negative economic development in Johnson County if the interstate went through White River Township.

Wouldn't an interstate help economic development along State Road 37?

Not really. It's important to remember that "Section 6" of I-69 (the road between Martinsville and the I-465 exit)

would not be completed until 2017 — 11 years from now. Any economic development would likely cease along State Road 37 until the interstate was built since a business could not depreciate a building in only a decade's time. There is more than \$240 million of proposed development along State Road 37, including a \$180 million medical center along County Line Road, which cannot be built if I-69 is constructed. Moving the route would eliminate the uncertainty that has existed for years about the interstate's location. Development of these properties would begin in months, bringing hundreds of high-paying jobs to our community and increasing our tax base.

What about the Toll Road?



Senator Waltz joined by Representative David Frizzell and Perry Township Trustee Jack Sandlin at a press conference on the route of I-69.

There are some in Indiana government who want to make I-69 a toll road. This is because the state does not have enough money to complete the road. Even with matching federal funds and money from the leased northern toll road, Indiana still needs \$600 million to complete the interstate. Some want to lease I-69 — as was done this year in "Major Moves" to I-80 — as a way to come up with the money. It is estimated that over half the toll money would come from our area.

In other words, the interstate will be worth more to someone signing a long term lease if everyone who drives to work via State Road 37 pays hundreds of dollars a year in tolls. That's another reason some want to use State Road 37 instead of an alternative route further west. Many of our citizens would choose to drive along Bluff Road, State Road 135 or U.S. 31 in order to travel to downtown Indianapolis without paying a toll. This would cause additional traffic congestion on our existing roads.

What will happen next?

I suspect that we'll be seeing a proposal in the 2007 General Assembly to move the route back to State Road 37 as well as to make I-69 a toll road. I have been working closely with representatives of Perry Township and Johnson County to educate the Indiana Department of Transportation officials about the impact these proposals would have on our community. I will continue to discuss with my fellow legislators alternative routes that cost millions of dollars less to build, do not destroy hundreds of homes and businesses and promote the growth of central Indiana's economy.

Lifetime Legislative Health Insurance

The Indiana General Assembly took the first step in banning the outrageous legislative perk of lifetime health insurance. I commend the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Brian Bosma, for his elimina-

I have renounced my lifetime health insurance and will continue to encourage the Senate to end this legislative perk.

tion of health insurance benefits of all current members of the Indiana House of Representatives. House and Senate leaders have broad discretion in the specific terms of what legislative benefits are given to their members, and I am pleased that the House of Representatives ended the policy that granted a member, as well as their spouse, the ability to receive lifetime health insurance provided that member serve at least six years in the General Assembly. The Senate made some reforms that did not go as far as those of the House of Representatives. A senator would have to serve at least six years and be over the age of 50 to qualify for this benefit. Since the average age of a member of the Indiana State Senate is 59, there is little change in the policy. It is clear that more reform is needed. I have renounced my lifetime health insurance and will continue to encourage the Senate to end this legislative perk.

Funeral Protesting Banned

Unfortunately, there have been some very offensive protests during the recent funerals of veterans killed in combat during the Iraq War. A group of individuals have targeted funerals of these brave soldiers and said obscene and vulgar things to the deceased's children and families. Regardless of any person's view of the war, it is important that we protect the solemnity and honor of these funerals. Accordingly, the Indiana General Assembly overwhelmingly passed a law that would prohibit a protester from being within



Senator Waltz meets with Thelma Good, a resident of Country Charm Retirement Community in Greenwood.

500 feet of the cemetery during a funeral. This distance will provide a buffer between someone who wishes to protest while allowing families peace during what might be the most difficult day of their lives. Governor Daniels quickly signed the bill into law in time for a soldier's funeral in north central Indiana. No protesters disrupted the ceremony.

Protecting Hoosier Property Rights

Last year the United States Supreme Court ruled that states and local governments could exercise eminent domain if government could show "better economic use" of the property. The legal case involved government taking people's homes in order for a business to have a corporate headquarters. The court allowed individual states to decide what criteria should be used in eminent domain. Indiana has a long tradition of respecting individual property rights and the legislature established very strict requirements before state and local government can take a person's home or other property. **I was proud to have voted for protecting the property rights of Hoosiers.**

Child Predators Targeted

I am proud to report that Indiana has the toughest laws against child molesters and pedophiles of any state in the nation. We have all been saddened by the news reports of children being assaulted by adult sexual predators. These attacks have occurred throughout the United States, including Indiana. The legislature raised the penalty for those who molest children, as well as defined a child predator as someone who molests someone younger than 12 years of age or violently assaults someone under 18 years of age. Penalties for predators were raised. It's important that criminals who repeat their crimes will be sent to prison for a very long time. These reforms will make Indiana's children safer, and I am very pleased that these laws were improved.